(a) whether Government have assessed and reviewed the effect of the increasing prices of steel on the construction industries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether this upward movement is adversely affecting several consuming industries which might ultimately affect the export of steel and steel products to the foreign market; and

(d) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to stabilise the steel prices in the overall interest of the economy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) and (b) The Government has examined the representations from the construction industry regarding the adverse impact of increasing steel prices. In a deregulated and liberalised environment, prices are determined by the free interplay of market forces. Nevertheless, as a measure of import facilitation, the Government has removed 33 steel items from the purview of DGFT Notification No. 44 with effect from 28th October 2003. Inclusion of steel items into the DGFT Notification No. 44 required the exporters of these steel items to India to register themselves with the Bureau of Indian Standards and was being viewed as a non-tariff barrier. Prices of steel items that reached a peak in August 2003 have subsequently stabilised.

(c) The recent upswing in steel prices has had the effect of reducing the profit margins of downstream consumer industries. However, the import facilitation as a result of withdrawal of steel items from the purview of DGFT Notification No. 44 has provided the option to downstream steel consumers to source their requirements through imports. Exporters can also avail of the Advance license route for importing their inputs at zero custom duty.

(d) In a deregulated environment, prices are determined by the free interplay of forces of demand and supply. Government does not intervene in the market to influence prices.

Merger of Nilachal Ispat Nigam Ltd. with Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited

1996. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to merge Nilachal Ispat Nigam Ltd.;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether similar step is being taken to merge IISCO (a subsidiary of SAIL) with SAIL; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI BRAJ KISHORE TRIPATHY): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) The need for merger has not been felt.

Doping Policy

1997. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have evolved any policy to deal with the dopping in sports after a spate of doping scandals during the last two years;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS (SHRI VIJAY GOEL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Anti-doping Programme is managed by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) through a centrally sponsored scheme of Government of India called "Scheme for Dope Test". The Government has launched the scheme for dope test in the Tenth Five Year Plan with the objectives: (i) to have an International Olympic Committee-accredited Dope Control Centre in India (ii) to maintain quality control system as required by International standard, *i.e.*, ISO 17025 (iii) to educate athletes, coaches and other supporting personnel about the harmful effects of dope (iv) to test and develop the rationale for drug free sports and a national anti-doping policy (v) to conduct in-competition and out-of-competition dope tests on sportspersons (vi) to promote research and training and (vii) to harmonize the dope-